

7. SIGNAGE

In conjunction with well-designed gateway features, a signage system clarifies the entrance and arrival sequence for people visiting the downtown. The signage system also highlights key destinations, which are targeted to different user groups. The implementation of a clear and consistent visitor wayfinding system is intended to increase user friendliness, reinforce downtown identity, and attract more visitors to the downtown and riverfront.

Several core principles inform the guideline strategy:

- Clear wayfinding should be provided for the first-time visitor and the local community.
- The system should build awareness and a positive image of downtown Lynchburg and should function as a marketing tool for downtown.
- Historic sites should be promoted and linked throughout the system.
- The sign elements and graphics will reinforce downtown identity and help create a sense of "place."
- The signs and environmental graphics should be unique, attractive, and complement the physical environment, both built and natural.

User Groups

The signage system must consider its audience in order to be effective. The following groups have been identified as the primary user groups or audience, and are ranked in order from least familiar to most familiar with Downtown Lynchburg:

1. Area tourists, especially historic tourism, drawing from nearby regional historic sites.

2. City and regional residents visiting for government business and/or entertainment.
3. Business and commercial users.
4. Employees and workers, especially City Hall and Courthouse.
5. Downtown neighborhood residents.

Destinations and Nomenclature

A list of visitor destinations and public amenities must be agreed upon and approved for inclusion on signage. Final nomenclature, especially destination names, should be reviewed for clarity and strictly enforced to minimize visitor confusion. The signage system is essential for revealing key destinations that would not be immediately obvious, such as the river, and for wayfinding on one-way streets that require circuitous routes.

Information should be restricted to public destinations. It is not recommended that private business, aside from major hotels and transportation centers, be identified on the majority of public signage. Individual commercial enterprises such as restaurants and shops, however, can be listed on the changeable directory maps of information kiosks.

From their cars, visitors should be able to find the general location of major destinations and nearby parking. Major destinations appear on Downtown directional signs, and certain major destinations may appear on advance guide signs and exit signs on the Expressway. Once on foot, visitors are directed to specific locations and to secondary destinations. Secondary destinations appear on pedestrian directional signage and on visitor information kiosks. The following is a suggested list of destinations and information for inclusion on downtown Lynchburg signage.

Major Destinations (Downtown Directional Signage)

- Downtown Lynchburg
- James River Park
- Public parking
- City Hall
- Old Court House Museum
- Amazement Square
- The Academy of Music
- Riverviews
- Hotels
- Courthouse Hill Historic District
- Community Market
- James River Welcome Center
- Garland Hill Historic District
- Diamond Hill Historic District
- Federal Hill Historic District
- Daniel's Hill Historic District/Point of Honor
- Blackwater Creek
- Percival's Island
- Regional routes/downtown egress
- Truck routes

Secondary Destinations (Pedestrian Directional Signage/Visitor Kiosks)

- Restaurants and shopping
- Historic and interpretive areas
- Public transit stops
- Park areas (Canal Park, Overlook Terrace, Upper and Lower Basin Parks, and James Riverwalk)
- Bike trails
- Boat access
- Public parking
- Cinema/Ice Rink
- Historic/interpretive areas
- Scenic vistas
- Public facilities (toilets, telephones, information, police)
- Accessible pathways (wheelchair accessible)

Downtown Identity

The signage system is first a functional wayfinding and information system. As it features prominently on the urban streetscape, however, it also is an opportunity to reinforce the positive aspects of the downtown character. Materials, scale, form, and proportions should be harmonious with other streetscape elements such as lighting, benches, planting, architecture, setbacks, and sidewalk and curb design. Sign graphics themselves can contribute to the overall image—whether the look is utilitarian, historic, or contemporary. It is important to consider all these elements and formulate a "design vision" for the downtown streetscape prior to advancing signage designs. The consistent use of these graphic elements on signage structures will help the user to recognize the signage as a useful information system, and will contribute to the identity of the district. The identity system can extend across the full spectrum of media: printed materials, exterior streetscape, and downtown websites.

Visitor Circulation and Destinations

The vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems for the riverfront and downtown are shown on Figures 3 and 4, respectively. Based on visitor circulation, information needs, and physical context of various site conditions, a series of decision points and identity corridors is identified. From this, a sequence of information has been developed and organized into the following hierarchy of sign types proposed for the district:

- Advance guide signs (arterial)
- Exit signs (arterial)
- Gateway landmarks (combined landscape and graphic feature)
- Downtown vehicular directional
- Street signs
- Public parking identification
- Visitor information kiosk
- Pedestrian directional
- Historical/interpretive signage
- Trail markers

The different sign types are described in the following pages, using examples of each sign and specific criteria for function, audience, content, placement, and design.

7.1 Advance Guide Sign

Function:	Wayfinding from major roadways such as Route 29 Expressway and Business Route 29; identifies in advance the downtown and associated major destinations within; identifies appropriate exit number; organizes and consolidates information along the Expressway
Audience:	Vehicular
Text & Graphics:	Downtown name, exit number, major attractions, route number icons
Content Criteria:	Permanent destinations; visitor attendance (typically 200,000 visitors per year) and traffic generated warrants this type of sign; typically three attractions per sign; subject to VDOT approval
Placement Criteria:	Along highway roadside or on overhead structure; typically one mile in advance of exits; 400 feet away from other guide signs
Design:	Conforms to VDOT standards



Example of Advance Guide Sign

7.2 Exit Sign

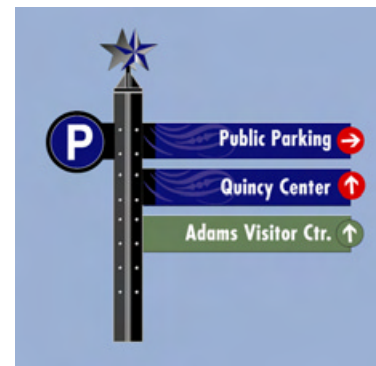
Function:	Clearly identifies correct exit for the downtown and attractions; reinforces association of exit with the downtown
Audience:	Vehicular
Text & Graphics:	Downtown name, exit number, directional arrow
Content Criteria:	Same as Advance Guide sign; subject to VDOT approval
Placement Criteria:	Located at exit ramps
Design:	Conforms to VDOT standards



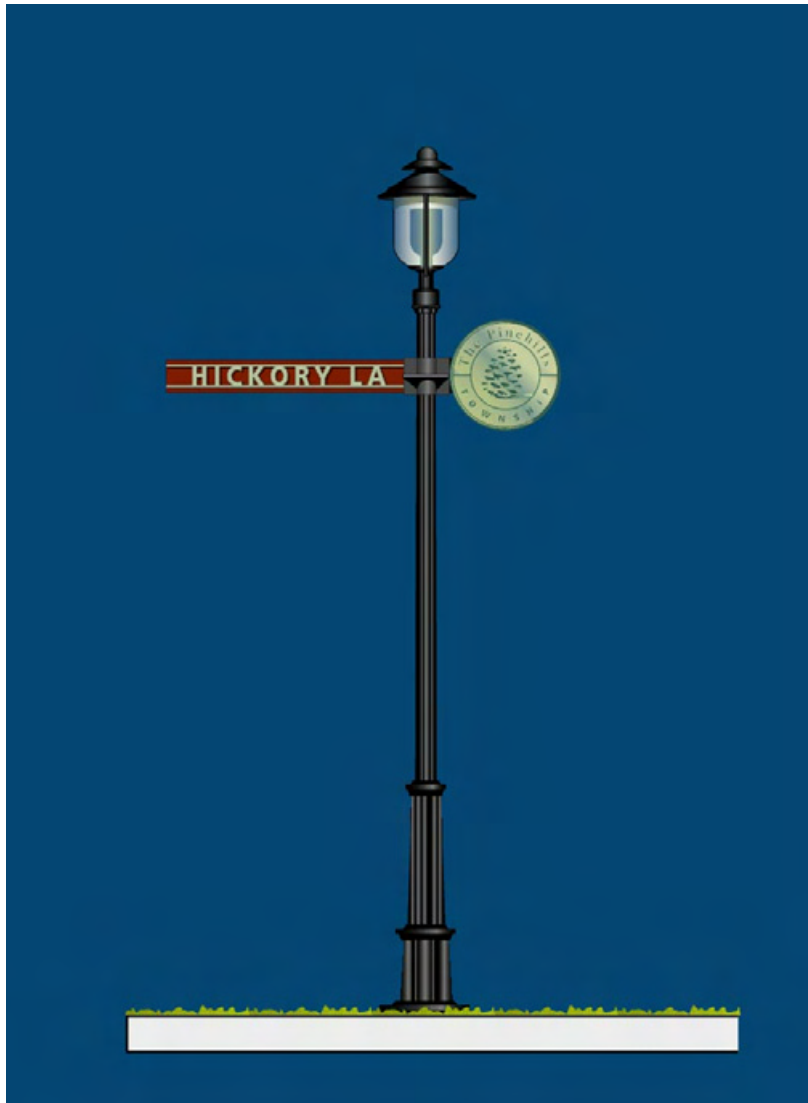
Example of Exit Sign

7.3 Downtown Directional

Function:	Provides directions to specific attractions and public parking within the downtown; provides direction between Expressway exit ramps and downtown portals and other adjoining destinations
Audience:	Primarily vehicular visitors; also pedestrian
Text & Graphics:	Downtown identity header, downtown attractions, parking
Content Criteria:	Downtown-specific attractions and parking; destinations should be tourist oriented, major traffic generators, or have events that are major traffic generators
Placement Criteria:	At intersections of exit ramps and arterial streets and along primary downtown access routes; along primary downtown streets where a key decision is involved such as Ninth, Twelfth, Main and Church Streets; located mid-block, or just in advance of turn; located on light poles or freestanding
Design:	Downtown-specific, incorporating district identity, color, symbol, and typographic palette



Typical Examples of District Directional Signage



Typical Examples of District Street Signs

7.4 District Street Sign

Function:	Identifies street names; reinforces district identity; increases legibility of street name
Audience:	Vehicular and pedestrian
Text & Graphics:	Street name; can also include district name, graphic, or color system
Content Criteria:	All downtown streets; can include sub-district information such as historic neighborhood name (e.g., Diamond Hill, Court House Hill)
Placement Criteria:	Intersections, on far side facing approach direction; attachment and poles can be district-specific
Design:	Utilize highly legible font on contrasting color background



7.5 Public Parking Identification

Function:	Identifies public parking facility; eliminates confusion for visitors over public versus private parking; can also list nearby attraction(s)
Audience:	Primarily vehicular
Text & Graphics:	Standard district-wide parking "P" symbol and color field; identify nearby attractions; operator name

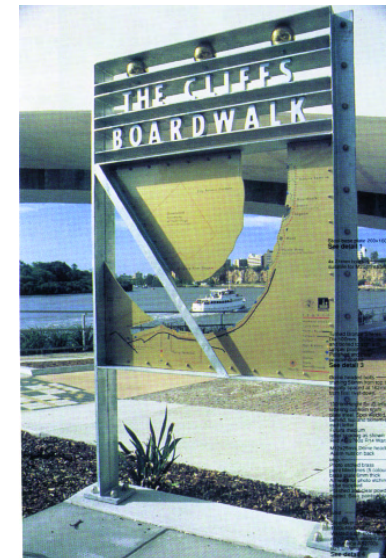
Content Criteria:	Attractions must be major public destinations; parking symbol "P" to be prominently featured over operator name
Placement Criteria:	Freestanding or mounted to building or parking structure façade
Design:	Downtown standard design elements; ideally illuminated for nighttime legibility; can provide "lot full" variable message signage



Typical Examples of Public Parking Identification

7.6 Visitor Information Kiosk

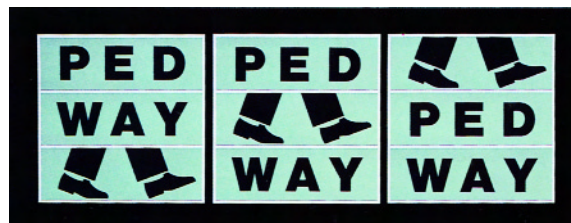
Function:	Provides downtown information and links surrounding neighborhoods; reinforces downtown identity; provides public transit information; encourages walking and links to other area destinations
Audience:	Pedestrian
Text & Graphics:	Downtown identity header; "you-are-here" downtown guide map; larger geographic area map; historic maps; transit system diagram and event poster display cases; allow information access for the disabled; possible historic interpretive panels; interactive systems (CD-ROM, web site access, voice line)
Content Criteria:	All downtown attractions and public amenities; pedestrian walking routes; location of staircases and overlook/vista points; commercial enterprises (restaurants and shops) can also be listed on changeable directory and keyed to map
Placement Criteria:	Placed near downtown activity core areas, near intersections of major pedestrian routes, transit hubs, and parking garages
Design:	Custom design indicative of downtown identity; accessible to the disabled; illuminated, requires power and possible data connection



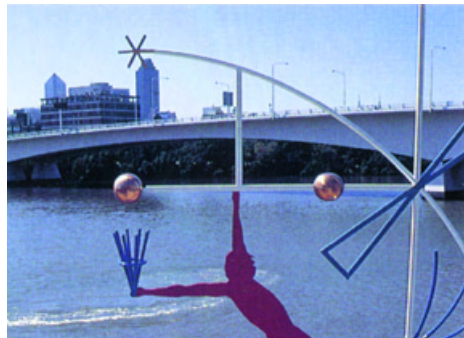
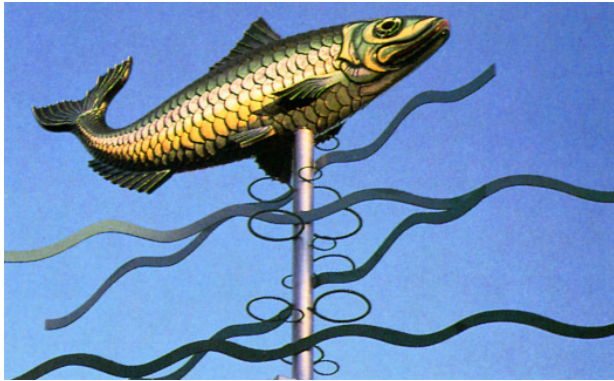
Typical Examples of Visitor Information Kiosks

7.7 Pedestrian Directional/Trail Markers

Function:	Provides pedestrian direction to downtown attractions, public amenities, transit options and regional trail systems; encourages walking and linking to other area destinations
Audience:	Pedestrian
Text & Graphics:	District identity header; directions to primary and secondary public destinations; displays walking times to destinations; accessible route information
Content Criteria:	Downtown attractions, public amenities, regional trail systems
Placement Criteria:	Near intersections of pedestrian routes where kiosks are not required, along longer pedestrian promenades for directional reassurance; use to trail blaze fitness paths
Design:	Custom design indicative of downtown identity; accessible to the disabled



Typical Examples of Pedestrian Directional Signage



Typical Examples of Interpretive Signage

7.8 Interpretive and Historic Signage

Function:	Tell a story about site-specific historic or environmental themes to engage and inform the pedestrian
Audience:	Pedestrian
Text & Graphics:	Downtown identity header; written narrative accompanied by illustrations and/or graphic symbols incorporated as public art into the environment
Content Criteria:	Educational information about specific site (history of early transportation and industry; flooding, local birds and wildlife etc); can be linked to other interpretive signage along a walking trail for a complete experience
Placement Criteria:	Near specific site or feature; sign panels or integrated into the environment such as pavement, walls, or other landscape features
Design:	Custom design consistent with downtown identity and other interpretive signs; accessible to the disabled including possible use of Braille and/or audio features